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TAGS: EINV PREL MASS XL  
SUBJECT: REGIONAL SECURITY AND EXPROPRIATION CASE HEADLINE  
AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH PM DOUGLAS

Classified By: Charge d'affaires, a.i. D. Brent Hardt Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

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SUMMARY  
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¶11. (U) Prime Minister Denzil Douglas of St. Kitts and Nevis provided lukewarm assurances of his country's support on key upcoming human rights issues at the UNGA during a September 18 meeting with the Ambassador. The Ambassador also urged the PM to bring closure to the long-standing Angelus property dispute, which involves real estate expropriated from U.S. citizens. Douglas also provided his perspectives on Trinidad PM Manning's regional integration proposal, outlining areas of the initiative of interest to St. Kitts and Nevis. End Summary.

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UNGA SUPPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS VOTES  
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¶12. (U) Prime Minister Denzil Douglas reaffirmed his intent to attend the meeting with the Secretary in New York September ¶125. The Ambassador welcomed the news, noting that the U.S. will look to the Caribbean -- and to St. Kitts and Nevis in particular -- for support on key UNGA Third Committee resolutions. She emphasized the importance of both allowing discussion and votes on cases of serious human rights abuses and of then voting to condemn those abuses in keeping with their own strong historic support for basic human rights and dignity. Without committing to support specific resolutions, Douglas assured the Ambassador that human rights are always on his agenda, and added that the U.S. should see greater Caribbean cooperation.

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SECURITY CONCERN FOR ST. KITTS AND NEVIS  
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¶13. (U) Commenting on the recent Defense Ministerial in Banff, Canada, where he had chaired the side meeting with U.S. officials for CARICOM, Douglas assessed the meeting's tone as frank. Disappointed in the U.S. commitment to security in the region and the slow pace of progress, Douglas promised to engage with the Secretary on the issue during their meeting. The Ambassador referred to A/S Shannon's and SOUTHCOTM COM Stavridis' March, 2008 visit to Bridgetown, in which A/S Shannon urged CARICOM governments to take the lead in developing a regional security plan rather than wait for donors to take the lead. Increased drug trafficking, illegal arms trading, the effect of deportees and the inability of regional governments to patrol their own coastlines due to the lack of equipment were all concerns raised by Douglas. Trinidad and Tobago, Douglas noted, has made recent commitments to increase security in the Southern Caribbean, but he expressed skepticism with regards to security improvements in the North. He said that all countries in the

Caribbean, as well as the U.S., should be more committed to security.

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ANGELUS PROPERTY DISPUTE  
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14. (U) Stressing she is now receiving calls from Congress, the Ambassador urged the PM to take leadership in resolving the long-outstanding Angelus property dispute. After years of legal battles, the American Citizen investors are simply seeking compensation for the property, but have been repeatedly stonewalled by government functionaries and the Attorney General. The Ambassador emphasized the potential negative effect that a continuation of this dispute could have for American and other foreign investment if it is not resolved. Douglas assured the Ambassador that a resolution was near and that an undisclosed compensation amount had been determined based on the price the government obtained when it resold the property to another investor. Douglas described several ownership and management changes, which had allowed the property to fall into disrepair and cloud the actual ownership of the property. Douglas reiterated that he would attend to the matter, but emphasized that before any compensation was paid, claimants would have to prove their legal ownership. The Ambassador later visited the Angelus property and found it to be in decent shape. So much so that some of the units were occupied and others were being renovated.

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ECONOMIC UNION, NOT POLITICAL  
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15. (U) Douglas briefed the Ambassador on last month's regional integration meetings in Trinidad. Describing the OECS as "a collection of sub-regional states pursuing a common agenda economically," Douglas expressed support for further regional integration. Recognizing Trinidad and Tobago was a major trading partner, Douglas said he would like to see more rapid integration. Three states -- Grenada, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent -- signed a memorandum to move to political union by 2013. At this point, St. Kitts and Nevis is not interested in political union, he said, although they fully support the economic union.

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COMMENT  
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16. (U) The Angelus property dispute has been dragging on for many years. Several U.S. Citizen investors routinely call and email the Embassy to inquire about the status of their claims, and they have recently begun to involve their congressional representatives. The Ambassador made clear to Prime Minister Douglas that the U.S. was dissatisfied with the lack of progress. While Douglas, promises are welcome, similar promises in the past have gone unfulfilled. Post will watch this situation carefully as we prepare the first country commercial guide for St. Kitts and Nevis.  
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